

April 15, 2014

CRIMINAL CHARGES FILED AGAINST TRUCK DRIVER FOR ILLEGAL SALT WATER DUMP

BISMARCK, ND – Criminal charges have been filed against a Mountrail county truck driver accused of illegally dumping oil drilling waste, announced Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem. Leo Slemin, a driver with Black Hills Trucking Inc. of Wyoming, has been charged with a Class C Felony for illegally dumping salt water, in violation of the Industrial Commission's rules ensuring the proper disposal of oil and gas field waste materials.

The charge was brought following an investigation by Department of Mineral Resources Oil and Gas Division. The case is being prosecuted by the Attorney General's Office.

"The state will not hesitate to bring criminal and civil actions when we learn of instances of illegal dumping. Those who blatantly disregard rules designed to protect the environment and keep our citizens safe will be held accountable for their actions," said Stenehjem.

According to the investigative report, on February 14, 2014, an Inspector with the Department of Mineral Resources witnessed Slemin driving a semi-truck along a stretch of road in southwest Williams County with valves on the underside of the truck open, allowing salt water to flow directly onto the ground. The alleged incident occurred in an area where numerous reports of illegal dumping have been received.

"The majority of waste haulers should not have to compete with those few who illegally cut corners," said Stenehjem, who urged citizens and other waste haulers to report any suspected illegal dumping to the authorities. "Call the local law enforcement agencies, the state highway patrol, or the Department of Mineral Resources, and help us put a stop to it," he continued.

The case is scheduled for hearing in Williams County District Court on April 21, 2014, at 1:00 PM. If convicted, Slemin could be sentenced to a maximum penalty of five years' imprisonment, a fine of ten thousand dollars, or both.

The Department of Mineral Resources Oil & Gas Division is also pursuing civil penalties against Black Hills Trucking, Inc. for this incident and two other instances where Black Hills trucks were seen illegally dumping saltwater onto the same stretch of roadway.

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